
Volume 4

Chapter 16

Social

16 Social

This chapter provides an assessment of the potential social impacts associated with the construction and operation of the project on the Victorian environment. This chapter is based on Technical Appendix U: Social.

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) evaluates a project's intended and unintended social consequences. SIAs help assess how projects can be developed in a socially responsible and sustainable manner, considering the perspectives and concerns of affected stakeholders.

A key part of undertaking an SIA is engaging with communities and stakeholders through the planning process. SIAs help consider the perspectives and concerns of affected stakeholders.

The EIS guidelines set out the following requirements relating to social impacts:

- Section 4.2: Description of the existing environment
- Section 9: Economic and social matters
- Section 10: Consultation
- Section 5.11: Cumulative impacts.

Refer to Attachment 1: Guidelines for the Content of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the EIS guidelines.

The EES scoping requirements set out the following evaluation objective relevant to the social impact assessment:

- ***Agriculture, land use and socioeconomic*** – *Avoid and, where avoidance is not possible, minimise adverse effects on agriculture, forestry and other land uses, the social fabric of communities, and local infrastructure, businesses and tourism.*

Refer to Attachment 2: Scoping Requirements Marinus Link Environment Effects Statement for the EES scoping requirements.

The SIA identifies potential negative social impacts, such as loss of cultural heritage or vegetation removal, and positive impacts, such as job creation and economic development. Other aspects covered in the above EES evaluation objective are addressed in the following EIS/EES chapters:

- Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Economics
- Volume 3, Chapter 3 – Marine resource use
- Volume 4, Chapter 6 – Agriculture and forestry
- Volume 4, Chapter 8 – Traffic and transport
- Volume 4, Chapter 15 – Land use and planning.

Social impacts for components of the project located in Tasmania are also presented in the EIS/EES, Volume 2, Chapter 3 – Social, to address the requirements of the EIS guidelines.

16.1 Method

Informed by the compliance and significance assessment methods described in Volume 1, Chapter 5 – EIS/EES assessment framework, key steps for the SIA included:

- Defining a study area.
- Characterising existing conditions for the SIA, including:
 - Conducting community engagement and SIA consultation:
 - Community engagement has been ongoing since mid-2018. A range of activities, including workshops, webinars, pop-up stalls, drop-in sessions, presentations and group meetings, have been carried out.
 - SIA consultation was conducted using the social wellbeing framework to identify stakeholders to be consulted. One-on-one interviews were carried out with individuals, including landholders, community representatives, marine stakeholders and recreational groups.
 - The Victorian First Peoples Advisory Group was established by MLPL, providing a forum for representatives of the BLSC, BLCAC and GLaWAC to engage with and contribute to the project.
 - Conducting a literature review including demographic data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), governmental websites, First Peoples plans, government plans and strategies, industry news and academic literature, as well as the findings and recommendations of other studies.
 - Organising the findings to align with a social wellbeing framework to allow for the identification of potential community issues or benefits.
- Conducting an impact assessment, considering the sensitivity of identified social values and the magnitude of potential impacts to determine the level of impacts. The SIA aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential social impacts, their scale, and the level of vulnerability or sensitivity of the affected communities. The assessment of significance matrix assigned a low, moderate, high or major rating to each impact (positive and negative).
- Identifying potential cumulative impacts cumulative impacts within the study area.
- Developing EPRs in response to the impact assessment to reduce the identified impacts where necessary.
- Assessing residual impacts after implementation of mitigation measures to comply with the EPRs.

16.1.1 Social wellbeing framework

An important requirement of SIA is to have a framework that allows for identifying potential community issues and concerns and conveying the SIA's outcomes. The social wellbeing framework considers determinants of wellbeing and provides the basis for collecting baseline data and identifying and assessing the project's potential social impacts and benefits. The social wellbeing framework combined with the outcomes of community engagement and SIA consultation, including First Peoples consultation, has identified four key social values: community identity, economy and livelihoods, infrastructure and services, and people's productive capacities to describe social wellbeing. These values are defined in Table 16-1 and described in the context of the study areas below.

Table 16-1 Social wellbeing framework (after Smyth and Vanclay 2017)

Social value	Attributes and indicators
<p>Community identity Describes how a community defines itself in terms of civic participation, resilience, feelings of trust and safety and a sense of belonging and place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ social capital and community cohesion ✓ First Peoples' heritage and cultural values ✓ character and sense of place ✓ amenity and landscapes ✓ land use and natural resources ✓ ecology ✓ community safety
<p>Economy and livelihood Describes how people make a living and the economic structure of the affected community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ employment and workforce ✓ income ✓ industry and business (Agriculture, forestry and fisheries) ✓ housing affordability and availability ✓ socio-economic dis/advantage
<p>Infrastructure and services Describes the infrastructure and services that meet the affected community's needs and priorities, including municipal and social infrastructure and associated services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ governance (local, state, and national) ✓ community infrastructure and services (open space, health, education, daycare, aged care, religious) ✓ physical infrastructure (e.g., transport and municipal) ✓ housing (social)
<p>People's productive capacities Describes the skills, knowledge, and experience vital to survival and participation in society and its economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ health – physical and mental ✓ education, training, and skills ✓ food security

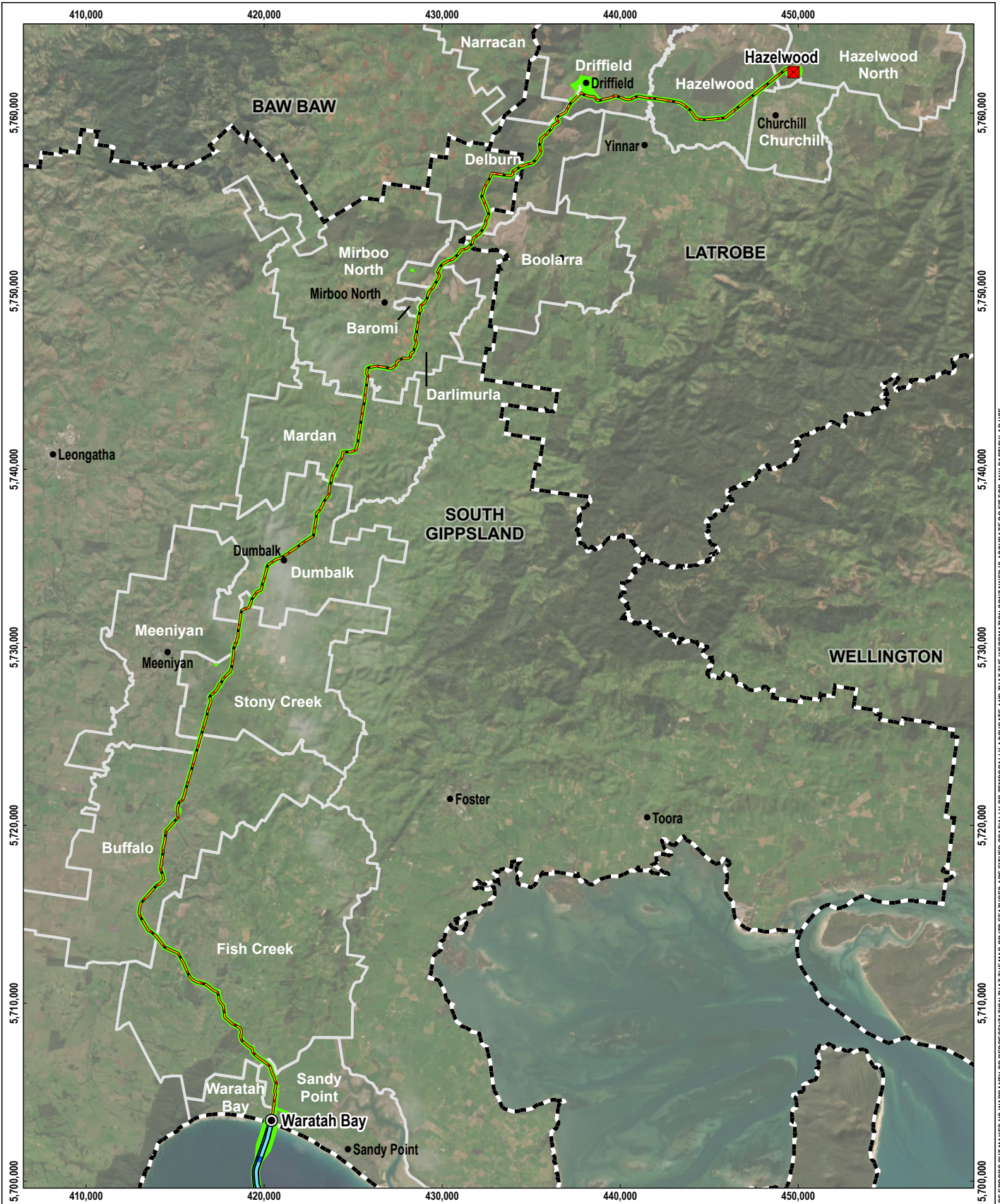
16.1.2 Study area

The SIA considers two study areas, as shown in Figure 4-91:

- Local study area, including the 18 state suburbs from the shore crossing at Waratah Bay to the converter station site at Hazelwood.
- Regional study area, comprising the South Gippsland and Latrobe City local government areas (LGAs).

The study areas are determined by including communities that may experience the effects of the project's construction and operational activities and with consideration to the ABS Census Statistical Areas in order to access and analyse data on baseline socioeconomic indicators.

The assessment of the project also considered the impacts to shipping and fishing activities in the marine study area, as defined by Technical Appendix H: Marine ecology and resource use. The marine study area covered a 16 km wide area (8 km either side of the project alignment centreline) to assess impacts to commercial fishing activities.



LEGEND

- Landfall
- Proposed converter station
- HVDC subsea cable
- Underground HVDC cable
- Cable option not progressing
- Local government area boundary
- State suburb intersecting study area



0 3 6 km
 SCALE 1:300,000
 PAGE SIZE: A4
 PROJECTION: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

SOURCE
 Proposed route from Tetra Tech Coffey.
 LGA boundaries from VICMAP. Suburbs from ABS (2021).
 Imagery from ESRI Online

MARINUS LINK PTY LTD

MARINUS LINK
EIS/EES

FIGURE 4-91

Social impact assessment study area



16.1.3 Guidelines

The method for completing an SIA and its required content are not prescribed by any Victorian or Commonwealth legislation or policies. Table 16-2 outlines the key guidelines used to inform the development of the SIA. A more detailed description of guidance that has informed the SIA process is provided in Volume 1, Chapter 4 – Legislative framework.

Table 16-2 Key guidelines informing the SIA

Title	Relevance to the assessment
<i>International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects</i>	The IAIA guidance was the primary guideline that has informed the content and process of the social impact assessment.
<i>Social Impact Assessment Guideline (NSW DPIE February 2023)</i>	Section 5 (Data validation) and Appendix A (Recommended structure of a SIA report) of the guidelines has informed the community engagement process and the structure of Technical Appendix U: Social.
<i>Technical Supplement - Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects (NSW DPIE February 2023)</i>	Section 4 of the guidelines (monitoring and management plan) has informed the requirements of a social impact management plan.
<i>Coordinator-General's Social Impact Assessment Guideline (QLD DSDILGP 2018)</i>	The guidelines have informed the integration of engagement outcomes into the SIA and the requirements of the social impact management plan.
<i>The Interim Engaging with First Nations People and Communities on Assessments and Approvals under Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (interim guidance)</i>	This guidance has informed the engagement process with First Nations Peoples and communities.

The IAIA SIA guidance shaped the integration of engagement outcomes into the assessment in response to engagement fatigue. The IAIA SIA guidance also informed the development of the recommendations for a social impact management plan and details of the approach and EPRs to manage social impacts.

16.1.4 Assumptions and limitations

The SIA relies on demographic data from secondary sources, notably the ABS. Except where stated, the accuracy or completeness of this information has not been verified.

Both demographic data and the results of community consultation represent a point in time. Demographics and community sentiment tend to change over time, either slowly in the case of an ageing community or quickly in response to, for example, a gold rush.

The SIA references the conclusions and EPRs from other studies prepared for the EIS/EES. Most relevant are the studies listed in the EES evaluation objective, including: Volume 1, Chapter 7 – Economics, Volume 4, Chapter 6 – Agriculture and forestry; Volume 4, Chapter 8 – Traffic and transport and Volume 4, Chapter 15 – Land use and planning. The SIA also references the outcomes of Volume 3, Chapter 3 – Marine resource use, Volume 4, Chapter 7 – Landscape and visual and Volume 4, Chapter 13 – Aboriginal cultural heritage.

16.2 Existing conditions

To understand existing conditions within the study area, the SIA process considered the feedback received through project engagement, the outcomes of structured SIA consultation interviews and the baseline analysis.

16.2.1 Outcomes of SIA consultation

Independent consultation with key stakeholders and directly affected landholders was undertaken to inform the SIA. The interview process was used to confirm existing baseline information, the perceived potential impacts, and potential benefits, as well as potential management and mitigation measures. Questions asked were designed to allow participants to talk about what they felt was important. The participant's responses and questions dictated the flow of the conversation.

The consultation process included:

- ▀ Landholders: A stratified and randomised sample of 10% of land uses intersected by the project alignment was identified. Landholders were invited to participate in the SIA consultation program.
- ▀ Broader community and local government: 112 email invitations to participate in SIA consultation were sent to stakeholders, including recreation groups, community groups, local government authorities, tourism bodies and real estate agents were invited to participate in the SIA process.
- ▀ First Peoples consultation: MLPL has progressed a range of activities focussing on First Peoples consultation and collaboration. The SIA team attended the Aboriginal Advisory Group meeting in December 2022. Invitations were also issued to First Peoples and Aboriginal Advisory Group members for a further session to inform the SIA process. First Peoples were also consulted for EIS/EES Technical Appendix J: Aboriginal and historical cultural heritage, and this feedback was reviewed as part of the SIA process.
- ▀ Fisheries and marine engagement: Fifty-three marine and fisheries industry stakeholders were invited to participate in the SIA interviews with questions focused on the impacts and opportunities for their industry. South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) sent a text to their members encouraging participation in the SIA consultation.

The key concerns raised by the community during engagement activities and SIA consultation included the following:

- Maintaining access to affordable housing.
- Maintaining the visual amenity of the area.
- Maintaining access to recreation areas.
- Protecting and preserving Aboriginal heritage and cultural values.
- Protecting a strong sense of community.
- Protecting the highly valued regional lifestyle.
- Retaining the agricultural capacity of farmland.
- Protecting flora and fauna within the area, including from the risk of bushfires.
- Providing long-term employment opportunities.
- Protecting the local tourism industry.
- Maintaining commercial fishing operations in the Bass Strait.
- Maintaining the workforce within key industries, including agriculture and forestry.
- Maintaining a responsive healthcare system, including emergency service provision.
- Maintaining a safe, functional road network.
- Protecting the health and wellbeing of the community, including community exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF).

The key opportunities raised by the community related to education and employment opportunities, including for First Peoples, socially vulnerable and the disadvantaged, and increased revenue for local businesses.

16.2.2 Social baseline

The baseline describes the existing social environment of the study area, including key socio-economic characteristics of the people within it and their living conditions. The baseline is used to form the basis for predicting and assessing the potential social benefits and impacts of the project (Duarte and Sanchez 2020), in line with the social wellbeing framework.

All data in the baseline summary below is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, except where noted.

Community identity

Consideration has been given to factors that contribute to how the community identifies itself in terms of civic participation, resilience, feelings of trust and safety and a sense of belonging in the local and regional study area. The baseline also provides context for the townships and LGAs within the study area and provides a n overview of demographic data that characterises the profile of the resident population.

Key findings included:

- Most people in the local and regional study area were born in Australia and spoke English at home.

- / Several recreation areas are considered sensitive to potential project impacts, including the beaches at Sandy Point and Waratah Bay, the Great Southern Rail Trail and Grand Ridge Rail Trail and Mirboo North State Forest.
- / South Gippsland Shire is a rural, residential, farming and holiday area. While Latrobe City LGA is an industrial area with nearby brown coal reserves to support coal-fired power stations and forestry resources, including Australia's largest pulp and paper mill.
- / The study area comprises 342 land parcels, with 296 of these land parcels being within the defined project easement. The majority is freehold land used for agricultural, forestry and rural residential activities.
- / LGAs in the regional study area had proportions of First Peoples above that of the state level (1.0% for Victoria, 1.2% for South Gippsland LGA and 2.1% for Latrobe City LGA).
- / Both LGAs have experienced growth in population in the last two decades.
- / The median ages in the regional study area are greater than 42 years old compared to 38 years for Victoria (South Gippsland is the highest in study area at 49 years).
- / Latrobe City LGA had the lowest proportion of the population who had undertaken voluntary work for an organisation, while South Gippsland and the local study area were well above the state average of people who had volunteered.

Economy and livelihood

Economy and livelihood consider how people make a living in the local and regional study area and provide an overview of the economy's structure.

Key findings included:

- / Agriculture in the Southern Gippsland region of Victoria contributes to over \$2 billion in gross regional product per year (RMIT 2019). 80% of the agricultural produce in the region is supplied by beef, dairy and horticulture.
- / For the financial year ending 30 June 2021, the total gross value of agricultural production for the South Gippsland Shire was \$652.5 million, with crop total gross value at \$81.2 million and livestock processing total gross value of \$257.1 million.
- / The percentage of the working-age population either in or actively seeking employment is lower in the local and regional study areas (55%) than the state average (62.4%). Latrobe City LGA has higher unemployment (6.6%) than South Gippsland LGA (3.2%).
- / The healthcare and social assistance sectors are the largest employers in the local and regional study areas.
- / Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing is higher in South Gippsland LGA (15%) than in Latrobe City LGA (2.8%).
- / There is an over-representation of unemployment by First Peoples within the regional study area.

- Labour force participation of about 55% in the local and regional study areas was lower than that of the state (62.4%).
- The unemployment rate for Latrobe City LGA illustrates significant variation over the ten-year period – the unemployment rate is higher than that experienced in South Gippsland LGA.
- Higher proportions of households in the local and regional study areas were classified in the very low- and low-income brackets compared to that of the state, with the Latrobe City LGA being the highest in this classification.
- Higher rate of home ownership within the LGAs than the state.
- Lower proportion of rented properties within the LGAs than the state.
- The rental vacancy rates within the LGAs were below 2.5%.
- Overall, Latrobe City LGA is considered socio-economically disadvantaged, whilst South Gippsland is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged.

Infrastructure and services

The baseline considers how infrastructure services the needs and priorities of the affected community, including municipal and social infrastructure and associated services.

Key findings included:

- All education facilities in the local study area are located at a distance exceeding 1 km from the project alignment.
- TAFE Gippsland provides vocational education and training services in the regional study area. Federation University, Australia Gippsland campus, is located in Churchill.
- Gippsland Primary Health Network: 272 medical practitioners per 100,000 people compared to 421 for Victoria.
- South Gippsland and Latrobe City LGAs have fewer medical and dental practitioners per 100,000 population than Victoria.
- Latrobe City's four major towns – Moe, Morwell, Churchill and Traralgon – are linked through strong bus and rail connections. The V/Line rail services run every hour between Melbourne and Traralgon.
- South Gippsland has no train station; bus connections run from train stations in Latrobe City.

People's productive capacities

The population's health, skills, knowledge and experience that enable them to participate in society and the economy have been considered an important part of the baseline.

Key findings included:

- Latrobe City LGA (9.6%) and the local study area (9.1%) have higher proportions within their communities who experience a mental health condition compared to the state average (7.5%).

- Gippsland Primary Health Network (PHN) has less than half the psychologists (47 per 100,000 people) than that of Victoria (103 per 100,000 people).
- One-third of the residents in South Gippsland LGA and the local study area have one or more long-term health conditions. In contrast, Latrobe City LGA has slightly more of the population with one or more long-term health conditions.
- The local and regional study areas had lower proportions of their population that had achieved higher than a bachelor's degree than the state, but higher proportions achieved a Certificate 3.
- The Victorian government has acknowledged that new skills are required across Victoria, particularly in regional areas, as new energy generation, transmission and distribution forms are approved for construction.

16.3 Social value sensitivity

The engagement and SIA consultation outcomes, together with the baseline findings, inform the social value sensitivity assessment whereby each social value was assigned a sensitivity rating. The information was aligned to the social wellbeing framework to confirm all key social values were identified. Table 16-3 provides an outline of the values.

Table 16-3 Sensitivities of social values

Social value	Attributes and indicators	Sensitivity	Justification for sensitivity rating
Community identity	Social capital and community cohesion	Very sensitive	Stakeholders indicated they were passionate about protecting their strong sense of community.
	First Peoples' heritage and cultural values	Very sensitive	Consultation indicated that this aspect of the social environment is of high importance and has limited capacity to adapt to change. The importance of First Peoples culture was highlighted during the consultation.
	Amenity and landscape	Very sensitive	Stakeholders highly value town character and landscapes in agricultural areas, conservation reserves, national bushlands and beaches. Consultation indicated a strong social value with recreational fishing.
	Land use and natural resources	Very sensitive	Consultation indicated a strong community value around land use and natural resources and that it contributes materially to people's livelihoods within the study area. Specifically, it was noted the importance of farms, revegetation projects and native vegetation and wildlife.
	Ecology	Very sensitive	Consultation highlighted that any impact on threatened species would have a very sensitive rating, given this importance to the community. Recreational groups highlighted this during consultation.
	Community safety	Very sensitive	The sensitivity rating was determined to be very sensitive in line with the community consultation undertaken for the <i>Latrobe City Council Plan 2021-2025</i> – safety was raised as a key area with high community interest. It contributes materially to the safety of people within the study area.
Economy and livelihood	Employment and workforce	Very sensitive	This sensitivity rating was determined based on the consultation and baseline study highlighting the importance of employment in the region in contributing materially to livelihood. Stakeholder feedback further highlighted the importance of employment and workforce training opportunities as the region's workforce transitions away from coal sector power.
	Industry and business	Very sensitive	Consultation indicated a strong community value around local industry and business, contributing materially to the livelihoods of people within the study area.
	Industry and business	Very sensitive	Agriculture and forestry were noted as key livelihoods of people in the South Gippsland region.
	Industry and business	Very sensitive	Disruption to commercial fishing and shipping operations is significant.
	Housing affordability and availability	Very sensitive	Consultation indicated that housing affordability and availability contributes to the livelihood and health of people in the study area.
	Economy and livelihood	Very sensitive	Economic prosperity was noted during the consultation to be of significant importance to the study area.

Social value	Attributes and indicators	Sensitivity	Justification for sensitivity rating
Infrastructure and services	Community infrastructure and services – health and wellbeing	Sensitive	Consultation indicated that community infrastructure and services contributes to the livelihood and health of people in the study area.
	Physical infrastructure – connectivity	Sensitive	Consultation highlighted that people in the study area value their rural lifestyle and ease of connection to neighbours and town centres.
	Physical infrastructure – safety and capacity	Very sensitive	Consultation indicated that safety and capacity of infrastructure contributes to the livelihood and health of people in the study area. The study area highly values safety and the capacity of the local road network.
People’s productive capacities	Health – physical and mental	Very sensitive	This rating has been determined based on mental health contributing materially to people’s livelihoods within the study area. The consultation feedback supported this.
	Health – skills development and training	Sensitive	Consultation indicated that skills development and training contributes to the livelihood and health of people in the study area.

16.4 Social impact and opportunity assessment

The SIA considered the social impacts associated with the project during construction and operation. The other technical studies have informed social impacts. The broad conceptualisation of social impacts used for the SIA is consistent with the International Association for Impact Assessment's current guidance on project-level impact assessment. This guidance provides an important insight into the scope of social impacts (Vanclay, Esteves and Franks 2015, p.2):

Because 'social impact' is conceived as being anything linked to a project that affects or concerns any impacted stakeholder group, almost anything can be a social impact so long as it is valued by or important to a specific group. Environmental impacts, for example, can also be social impacts because people depend on the environment for their livelihoods and because people may have place attachment to the places where projects are being sited. Impacts on people's health and wellbeing are social impacts.

The SIA has considered both impacts and opportunities and is presented to align with the social wellbeing framework.

16.4.1 Construction impacts

Community identity

The SIA consultation found that residents highly value all aspects of community identity. In particular, consultation highlighted the importance of the existing amenity, landscapes and sense of place which underpins the rural (particularly South Gippsland) and coastal lifestyle of the region.

The construction activities may affect community identity values for some residents. Construction activities may temporarily impair residents' enjoyment of their properties and activities undertaken within them, and for some, it may be disruptive or annoying.

Table 16-4 details identified impacts that could affect community identity during the project's construction. All impacts to the value of community identity have been rated high or major before mitigation.

The areas identified of potential major impact pre-mitigation are:

- First Peoples heritage and cultural values
- native fauna and flora
- marine environment.

The assessment considers the impacts on the communities within the local and regional study areas through the effect on aspects highly valued by the community including First Peoples heritage and cultural values, and native vegetation and animals. Harm to these values would represent a major social issue.

The rating of major for impacts to First Peoples’ heritage and cultural values reflects the potential for considerable change from baseline conditions and that this could affect culture through, for example, a permanent loss of the physical record. MLPL is working with First Peoples groups to prepare cultural values assessments which will cover values both terrestrial landscapes and marine submerged landscapes.

With respect to native flora and fauna, the area of disturbance is a 20 m to 36 m wide construction corridor (103.75 ha in total), which has been sited to minimise impacts on plants and animals. However, 37 threatened flora species and 55 threatened fauna will likely occur in the area and could be impacted.

The social impacts due to the potential for impacts to the marine environment has been assessed as high, prior to applying measures to comply with EPRs. Impact to the marine environment could occur due construction of the shore crossing and laying of the subsea cables. Disturbance of the seabed will temporarily mobilise sediment into the water column. Impacts to water quality, seabed habitats and associated benthic biological communities from seabed disturbance were assessed to be short-term and recoverable. There is also a low diversity and abundance of ecology in the sea bed.

Collision of construction vessels with marine mammals, artificial light disturbance, and introduction of invasive marine species were all considered low or very low impact by the technical assessment. High frequency cetaceans may be impacted by underwater noise during construction if they reside alongside the cable laying vessel. While it is considered unlikely for cetaceans to remain in the vicinity of the cable laying ship for an extended period of time, a conservative approach has been adopted and therefore an impact magnitude of moderate was assessed. It is more likely that cetaceans will flee in which case the magnitude of the impact would be low.

The impacts on these three sensitive receivers are addressed in Volume 4, Chapter 13 – Aboriginal cultural heritage, Volume 4, Chapter 11 – Terrestrial ecology and Volume 3, Chapter 2 – Marine ecology.

Table 16-4 details the potential construction impacts on community identity.

Table 16-4 Construction impacts – community identity

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Noise, vibration and visual disturbance causing amenity impacts.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Amenity impacts for nearby residents due to dust from construction activities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Community identity: Land use and natural resources	Negative: The project’s construction activities may result in temporary access changes to regional reserves, rail trails, marine areas and beaches that are used by the community and are highly valued.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Community identity: Ecology	Negative: The project’s construction could impact on fauna and flora through injury or fatality through vehicle strikes, disturbance of habitat through vegetation clearing and fire risk.	Very sensitive	Major	Major

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Community identity: Ecology	Negative: Impacts on the marine environment from construction activities offshore and nearshore.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Community identity: First Peoples values, cultural diversity and heritage	Negative: The project's establishment may result in the loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage values	Very sensitive	Major	Major

Economy and livelihood

The SIA found the community have strong values aligned with local employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, sustaining agriculture and farming in the region (South Gippsland) and housing affordability and availability.

The assessment considered the impacts on employment; workforce training; workforce availability; the local economy, including key sectors of agriculture and forestry; housing availability; and fishing and shipping activities in Bass Strait. The assessment for economy and livelihood values impacted during construction are outlined in Table 16-5.

The assessment identified 15 impacts to the value of economy and livelihood, six of which are positive impacts. The initial impact ratings before mitigation include:

- 2 low positive
- 7 moderate (4 positive)
- 3 high (1 positive)
- 3 major negative.

The positive impacts identified relate to the employment opportunities generated by construction, supporting local businesses through the purchasing of goods and services, and contribution to the creation for new opportunities for First Peoples businesses.

The project will provide employment opportunities across the region, state and national workforce. It will contribute to a diversity of employment and skills training opportunities, and the provide broader workforce training and development opportunities.

Three major negative impacts prior to implementation of EPRs were found to potentially affect the community's economy and livelihood. The impacts include reduced availability of affordable housing, biosecurity impacts on agriculture and reduced wood flows from forestry plantations.

The affordability and availability of housing in the local and regional study areas could be affected by the demand on housing from the construction workforce for the project. Rental vacancy rates are a good indicator of demand and, therefore, of the potential ease or difficulty of securing a rental property in several suburbs. The rental vacancy rates in Fish Creek, Sandy Point, Mirboo North, and Yinnar are below 1%. This indicates a shortage of rental properties, which can result in increased rent prices and low-income

households being priced out of the market. Consultation during the SIA process further highlights the concern from the community about the availability of rental supply.

Biosecurity impacts on agricultural and forestry enterprises are considered major prior to implementing EPRs due to the potential for spreading pathogens, weeds, pests, pathogens, diseases, or contaminants during construction activities, reducing yields, quality and marketability for the farm produce from construction activities created through the movement of people (and their food and water), equipment, machinery and vehicles.

The potential reduction in woods flows from permeant clearing of tress or premature harvesting as also been assessed as major, prior to the implementation of mitigation measures to comply with EPRs.

The high negative unmitigated impacts relate to the potential disruption to agriculture and forestry through restricted access and the potential for damage caused to natural assets, including soil, vegetation, water and topography.

Volume 4, Chapter 6 – Agriculture and forestry, addresses the impacts on the agriculture and forestry.

Table 16-5 Construction impacts – economy and livelihood

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: Short-term employment of 50% of the construction workforce in the local and regional study area.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project's construction is expected to support the short-term employment of approximately 50% of the total construction workforce from the state and national workforce.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: May contribute to a diversity of longer-term and secure employment opportunities and skills training opportunities for residents across various skill levels.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Positive: Supporting local businesses through the supply of goods and services	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Access to areas within Bass Strait will be temporarily restricted, which may impact commercial fishing and shipping operations.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: May contribute to the creation of new opportunities for First Peoples' businesses to provide services which support activities and workforces on the ground as work progresses.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: Workforce training and development in the local and regional study area	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood:	Negative: Potential for tourism accommodation to be constrained due to the construction workforce using	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Employment and workforce	short-term accommodation providers. This may result in fewer tourists visiting the region, impacting revenue for regional tourism operators and local businesses such as retail and food services.			
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Positive: Use of short-term accommodation providers by non-resident construction workers	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Negative: Reduced availability of workers for other sectors, e.g., agriculture due to the projects requirement for construction workers	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Housing affordability and availability	Negative: Increased rental demand due to the construction workforce in the regional study area may reduce availability and increase prices	Very sensitive	Major	Major
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Disruption to agricultural and forestry activities due to construction activities	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Reduced agricultural and forestry productivity yields as a result of construction activities	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Potential for biosecurity impacts on agricultural and forestry enterprises	Very sensitive	Major	Major
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Impacts to the forestry industry with reduced woods flows from permeant clearing of tress or premature harvesting.	Very sensitive	Major	Major

Infrastructure and services

The project’s anticipated construction workforce may require up to 350 personnel at any one time. Around 50% of the workforce is expected to be sourced locally within the Gippsland region. The remainder of the workforce is expected to be sourced from other areas of Victoria and from outside of Victoria. An increase in population can increase demand for infrastructure and services in the study area.

The baseline research and consultation highlighted that emergency services are limited in rural areas, with fewer GPs and health professionals per capita than across the state. Where this demand exceeds these services’ capacity, service provision for the existing community may be compromised. This section considers the potential for high demand to be placed on GP and an emergency services/hospital in the study area, with any emergencies likely directed to the Latrobe Regional Hospital in Traralgon.

The consultation also highlighted that people in the study area value their rural lifestyle and ease of connection to neighbours and town centres. In particular, the community highlighted the importance of access to the rural fire brigade and emergency service access.

The impact assessment identified five negative impacts that could put pressure on local services. These included two moderate and three high impacts before implementing EPRs. Two high impacts relate to the

potential for construction traffic to impact the safety of the road network and the potential for the movement of construction vehicles to impact the safety of vulnerable road users, such as school children, due to the haulage route passing by an educational institution. One high impact relates to the movement of the transformer transporter and potential disruption of transport services and infrastructure.

The two moderate impacts relate to the potential increase in demand for the healthcare system from construction works and the potential for traffic delays for rural road users.

Volume 4, Chapter 8 – Traffic and transport addresses impacts on traffic and transport. This chapter acknowledges the impacts on communities from reduced road safety due to the project.

The impact assessment is shown in Table 16-6.

Table 16-6 Construction impacts – infrastructure and services

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Infrastructure and services: Health and wellbeing	Negative: The project's construction ,au increased demand for health and emergency services providers, which may compromise service provision to the existing to local and regional community	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate
Infrastructure and services: Connectivity	Negative: The performance of the road network in the project in construction may cause delays for existing road users, reducing the efficiency of the rural road network for rural road users in the local study area.	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate
Infrastructure and services: Connectivity	Negative: Disruption of public transport services and infrastructure due to the movement of the transformer transporter	Sensitive	Major	High
Infrastructure and services: Safety and capacity	Negative: The capacity of the road network's road condition, design and operation of the road network to perform safely is reduced through additional traffic use by the project.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Infrastructure and services: Safety and capacity	Negative: Reduced road safety of vulnerable road users including children and school buses	Very sensitive	Moderate	High

People's productive capacities

This SIA has considered the potential for the project to impact people's productive capacity to participate in society and its economy in the local and regional study area through impacts on health and wellbeing, skill development and food security. No credible potential impact pathways were identified where the project could affect food security during the construction or operation.

During the SIA consultation, concerns regarding the potential for EMF to impact the health of nearby residents were expressed.

For some landholders, residents, and stakeholders, the project’s planning, construction and operation may result in anxiety, stress and frustration. Similarly, residents of local communities and stakeholders interested in managing natural environments may experience stress and anxiety due to the project’s construction.

As indicated in Table 16-7, three overall impacts have been identified; two are specially related to construction activities, while a further impact around employment opportunities for both construction and operations.

The two high unmitigated impacts relate to the feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration for residents and landholders. This is because of the uncertainty about the potential impacts that could occur on their property during construction, and the project will require an investment of time by landholders. For the broader community, there may be concerns due to the perceived uncertainty and any long-term impact from construction activities such as EMF or ongoing noise disruption.

A low positive impact has also been identified with the potential for employment opportunities for First People, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction workforce.

Table 16-7 Construction impacts – people's productive capacities

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
People’s productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: The project’s planning and construction will require an investment of time by landholders and may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
People’s productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: Concern about the project’s potential impacts (e.g., EMF) may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration for surrounding residents and communities	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
People’s productive capacities: Education, training and skills	Positive: Employment opportunities for First Peoples, females, youth, and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction workforce are made available.	Sensitive	Negligible	Low

16.4.2 Operational impacts

There are no expected impacts on the social infrastructure and services during the operation phase. This is because impacts relate primarily due to the presence of construction traffic and construction workers, which will not be present during the operation phase.

Community identity

During the operational phase, the potential remains for permanent damage to First Peoples heritage and cultural values as emergency repair works might disturb ground that was not already disturbed during construction. Based on this, before mitigation, the impact is rated as major. The converter station will be visible from public locations prior to establishing planting visual screening, therefore may impact the community’s sense of place. The impacts associated with change of visual amenity has been assessed,

before mitigation, as a moderate impact. A further three impacts relating to general disruption from maintenance works have resulted in three moderate and one low impact, as detailed in Table 16-8.

Table 16-8 Operation impacts – community identity

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Amenity impacts from operation activities, such as noise and vibration impacts	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Views of the converter stations from public locations may impact a community's sense of place	Very Sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: Land use and natural resources	Negative: The project's establishment may result in changes to amenity and character that reduce the use of highly valued regional reserves, rail trails, marine areas and beaches that have high community use and are highly valued.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low
Community identity: Ecology	Negative: Ongoing impacts on flora and fauna in line with maintenance activities such as access tracks maintained through vegetation, injury from vehicle movements, weeds and pests, dust emissions, fire ignition risk from vehicles, fragmentation of habitat and disturbance to fauna and flora through lighting.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: First Peoples values, cultural diversity and heritage	Negative: Project activities in the operational phase that result in vegetation removal and disturbance of ground surface and/or subsurface deposits may also create potential impacts on cultural heritage	Very sensitive	Major	Major

Economy and livelihood

With respect to operational activities, there is the potential for biosecurity impacts on agricultural and forestry with the movement of vehicles and operational staff access to properties. Maintenance and repairs will be required for the expected 40-year operational life of the project, and biosecurity breaches could occur at any point. The unmitigated impact has been assessed as a major.

The potential unmitigated impact of disrupting agricultural and forestry businesses during maintenance activities, and restrictions due to easement conditions has been assessed as high.

The project is expected to generate significant tax revenue receipts flowing to commonwealth, state and local governments. In line with this, a high unmitigated impact has been allocated to this benefit.

Table 16-9 details the operational impacts on the economy and livelihood of the study area.

Table 16-9 Operation impacts – economy and livelihood

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
Economy and livelihood	Positive: Economic activity to result in large taxation receipts (\$762 million in total from 2025 to 2050) from the economic activity generated by the project, which will flow to local, state and the Commonwealth Government.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
Employment and workforce	Positive: The project is expected to support the employment of three direct employees within the local and regional study area	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Biosecurity risks to agricultural and forestry activities with the potential introduction of weeds, pests, pathogens, diseases or contaminants that reduces yields, quality and marketability of the farm produce from operational and maintenance activities created through the movement of people (and their food and water), equipment, machinery and vehicles.	Very sensitive	Major	Major
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Reduced economic and environmental viability of agriculture, forestry and other farming enterprises from damage caused to soil and water quality caused by incursions from project operation and maintenance activities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High

People's productive capacities

Employment opportunities will be associated with the project's construction and operation. Construction opportunities will, by their nature, be short term, and there will be a strong reliance on contractors. This is because the construction company or companies building the project will have their own employees.

Socially vulnerable groups, including females, youth and First Peoples, have higher unemployment rates in the local and regional workforce. The potential impact of providing employment opportunities to these groups is a positive one. However, the low unmitigated impact reflects that these groups are unlikely to have the necessary skills, so few individuals are likely to benefit.

The project has the potential to increase the study area's prosperity, enhancing residents' health and wellbeing through investments in community infrastructure, potential downward pressure to be placed on the market regarding energy prices, as well as greater telecommunication security through the expansion of the supply-side infrastructure. This impact has been assessed as being high without mitigation.

During the project's operation phase, residents and communities may also experience stress, anxiety, and frustration due to their concerns about potential health impacts. It is recognised that some members of the public attribute a range of psychological reactions to exposure to EMF, including headaches, anxiety, suicide and depression (World Health Organisation 2021).

Table 16-10 provides details of the impacts during operation on people's productive capacities.

Table 16-10 Operation impacts – people's productive capacities

Social value	Impact	Sensitivity	Pre-mitigated magnitude	Initial impact
People's productive capacities: Education, training and skills	Positive: Employment opportunities for First Peoples, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction workforce are made available.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Positive: The project may add to the health and wellbeing of residents in the study area through investments in community infrastructure, the potential downward pressure to be placed on the market regarding energy prices, as well as greater telecommunication security through expansion of the supply-side infrastructure.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: Concern about the project's potential impacts (e.g. EMF) may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration for surrounding residents and communities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High

16.5 Decommissioning impacts

The current operational lifespan of the project is at least 40 years. At the end of its operational period, the project will either be decommissioned or upgraded to extend its operational period. Decommissioning will be planned and carried out in accordance with regulatory and landholder requirements at the time. A decommissioning management plan in accordance with approvals conditions will be prepared prior to planned end of service and decommissioning of the project.

Requirements at the time will determine the scope of decommissioning activities and impacts. The key objective of decommissioning will be to leave a safe, stable and non-polluting environment, and minimise impacts during the removal of infrastructure.

In the event that the project is decommissioned, all above-ground infrastructure will be removed, and associated land returned to the previous land use or as agreed with the landholder.

Should the removal of project infrastructure be required at the end of its operational life, it is expected that the nature, extent and magnitude of impacts would be no greater than those associated with construction. A decommissioning management plan will be prepared to outline how activities will be undertaken and potential social impacts managed.

16.6 Environmental performance requirements

EPRs set out the environmental outcomes that must be achieved during all phases of the project. In developing these EPRs, industry standards and guidelines, good practice and the latest approaches to managing impacts were considered. Project specific management measures, relevant legislation and policy requirements informed these EPRs.

The EPRs that will be implemented to manage potential impacts on social values are listed Table 16-11.

Table 16-11 EPRs

EPR ID	EPR
<p>S01</p>	<p>Develop and implement a social impact management plan</p> <p>Prior to commencement of project works develop a social impact management plan. The plan must be developed in consultation with relevant government and local government agencies, key stakeholders, and directly affected parties to minimise social impacts across the project during construction.</p> <p>The social impact management plan should be location specific and address key components of the construction program, including the staging of land cable trenching and installation. The plan should be a public document and be readily available on the project website.</p> <p>The plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A high-level summary of community baseline conditions, a summary of the anticipated social impacts (positive and negative), potential residual impacts and consideration for cumulative impacts. The plan will be reviewed and updated to address any shifts in the socio-economic environment on the baseline and impacts, and consider the ongoing cumulative impacts of projects in the region. ➤ Incorporate key strategies, their objectives for managing social impacts and the responsibilities for implementation of the strategies including the workforce and accommodation strategy (EPR S02), community and stakeholder engagement framework (EPR S03), community benefits sharing scheme (EPR S04), and industry participation plan (EPR S05). ➤ An employment and training performance strategy with a focus on providing local opportunities. ➤ Describe the requirement for first response medical capabilities on-site for both local and non-local employees and contractors to minimise the impact on local health services. ➤ Outline of a protocol to be developed for engaging with community and managing social impacts during an emergency that must be developed in consultation with local emergency response providers and referenced in the project’s emergency response plan. ➤ Specific strategies to support local farming communities in the region to address potential impacts resulting from the project. <p>The social impact management plan must be implemented during construction.</p>
<p>S02</p>	<p>Develop and implement a workforce and accommodation strategy</p> <p>Develop a workforce and accommodation strategy to address the potential social impact from the project’s workforce and accommodation requirements during construction. The strategy must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Be developed in consultation with government, industry and other relevant providers. ➤ Include a protocol for the identification and management of impacts due to accommodation requirements. ➤ Address cumulative impacts on accommodation due to other large-scale construction and infrastructure projects in the identified local study areas. <p>The outcomes of the strategy must be addressed during construction planning.</p>

EPR ID	EPR
S03	<p>Develop and implement a community and stakeholder engagement framework</p> <p>Prior to commencement of project works, develop a community and stakeholder engagement framework to outline the approach to engagement with community, stakeholders and First Peoples will be undertaken for project and by all contractors. The community and stakeholder engagement framework must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify key community and stakeholder groups across the project. ➤ Describe the approach for engaging the community, stakeholders and First Peoples. ➤ Establish communication protocols and tools for communication. ➤ Outline complaints policies and management procedures for recording, managing, and resolving complaints. The complaints management system must be consistent with <i>Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002: 2014 Guidelines for Complaints Management in Organisations</i>. <p>Principal contractors must prepare a community and stakeholder engagement management plan in accordance with the framework for their works package, and ensure sub-contractors comply with the management plan.</p> <p>The community and stakeholder engagement framework and contractor’s community and stakeholder engagement management plan must be updated annually to reflect any project or stakeholder changes and improvements identified.</p> <p>A register of complaints must be maintained by MLPL and provided to the Minister for Planning with annual audit reporting if requested.</p> <p>The community and stakeholder engagement framework must be implemented during construction.</p>
S04	<p>Develop and implement a community benefits sharing scheme</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of project works, develop a community benefits sharing scheme in consultation with communities and First Peoples in the local study area.</p> <p>The community benefits sharing scheme should be developed having regard to <i>Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers (July 2021)</i>.</p>
S05	<p>Develop and implement an industry participation plan</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of project works, develop an industry participation plan to integrate First People, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups into the project workforce. The purpose of industry participation plan is to stimulate entrepreneurship, business and economic development, providing First Peoples and vulnerable groups with more opportunities to participate in the economy. The plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set out an employment and supplier-use participation target within the project’s locality. ➤ Outline the project’s social procurement policies and local procurement policies considering each component and phase of construction. ➤ Be developed in conjunction with the requirements under the <i>Indigenous Employment and Supplier-use Infrastructure Framework (February 2019)</i>. ➤ Identify a range of potential opportunities for job-seekers and businesses to be involved in the project across the construction supply chain. ➤ Set employment targets with reference to the local First Peoples working age population within the project area and consistent with the ‘locals first principle’. ➤ Identify opportunities for females, youth and other socially vulnerable groups to be involved in the project workforce. <p>The plan must be implemented during construction and operation.</p>

In addition to the social impact EPRs above, the other EPRs that would reduce the potential for impacts on social values resulting from the project include:

- Marine resource use (Volume 3, Chapter 3 – Marine resource use)
- Agriculture and forestry (Volume 4, Chapter 6 – Agriculture and forestry)
- Landscape and visual (Volume 4, Chapter 7 – Landscape and visual)
- Noise and vibration (Volume 4, Chapter 10 – Noise and vibration)

- Terrestrial ecology (Volume 4, Chapter 11 – Terrestrial ecology)
- Aboriginal cultural heritage (Volume 4, Chapter 13 – Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- Land use and planning (Volume 4, Chapter 15 – Land use and planning)

The complete list of EPRs for the project is provided in Volume 5, Chapter, 2 – Environmental Management Framework.

16.7 Residual impacts

After the implementation of EPRs, there are no major social impacts. Five impacts remain high after mitigation with four being positive (two in construction and two in operation) and one residual high negative impact (construction).

In addition, there are 20 moderate residual impacts (5 positives) and 14 low residual impacts (2 positives), which are outlined in the following tables.

Below is a summary of the five residual high impacts:

- Increased rental demand during construction in the regional study area would result in a high negative residual impact to the attribute ‘housing affordability and availability’. This is a particular issue because the average income in the regional study area is 28% lower than the state average, which means that households will be more sensitive to rental price increases.
- Use of short-term accommodation by construction workers would positively impact the attribute ‘industry and business’, as would supporting local businesses through the goods and services required to support the project’s development. However, there is also the potential for tourism accommodation to be constrained due to construction workers using short-term accommodation, which could lead to lower tourist numbers visiting the region. This would affect revenue for regional tourism operators and local businesses such as retail and food services, negatively impacting the ‘industry and business’ attribute, with moderate residual impact.
- Construction activities will support local businesses through the goods and services required to support the project’s development contributing to a positive outcome for the community.
- The project is also expected to result in large taxation receipts (\$762 million over 25 years (from 2025 to 2050) for the economic activity generated by the project during operation, which will flow to local, state and the Commonwealth government to positively impact the ‘economy and livelihood’ attribute.
- The project may positively affect the health and wellbeing of residents in the study area during operation through investments in community infrastructure, the potential for downward pressure to be placed on the market regarding energy prices, as well as greater telecommunication security through expansion of the supply-side infrastructure.

The residual impacts for construction are summarised in Table 16-12 for construction and Table 16-13 for operation.

Construction

Table 16-12 Residual impact summary for project construction

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Community identity: Construction								
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Noise, vibration and visual disturbances causing amenity impacts	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	The implementation of EPRs will require the implementation of measures to minimise the impacts of noise during construction. This will include notifying landholders in advance of the works occurring, and the development of a complaint handling and response protocol	S03, NV02	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Amenity impacts for nearby residents due to dust from construction activities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	The implementation of EPRs that utilise the dust management and mitigation measures from the IAQM, EPA Victoria guidance documents will ensure activities have minimal impact on sensitive receptors.	AQ1, S03	Negligible	Low
Community identity: Land use and natural resources	Negative: The project's construction activities may result in temporary access changes to regional reserves, rail trails, marine areas and beaches that are used by the community and are highly valued.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	With the implementation of the recommended EPRs, it is anticipated that the changes in access to public land will be reduced to the extent that the preservation and people's use and enjoyment of the regional reserves, rail trails, marine areas and beaches will generally be maintained. There are likely to be temporary changes in amenity and this may reduce the use of these areas for short periods.	S03, T01	Minor	Moderate

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Community identity: Ecology.	Negative: The project's construction could impact on fauna and flora through injury or fatality through vehicle strikes, disturbance of habitat through vegetation clearing and fire risk	Very sensitive	Major	Major	Activity or location-specific management measures will be developed to comply with EPRs and incorporated into the detailed design and construction management plans to ensure further avoidance and mitigation are achieved. Based on the implementation of effective measures to achieve the EPRs, it is expected that the impact on threatened species, native vegetation and habitats could be reduced in the final design. Specific management measures will be determined by the contractors; however.	EC01, EC02, EC03	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: Ecology	Impacts on the marine environment from construction activities offshore and nearshore.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	The EPRs will ensure a dedicated fauna management plan with protocols will be developed and implemented to help mitigate construction impacts on the marine environment. A subplan will be developed to specially manage interactions with cetaceans.	MERU07 MERU08	Minor	Moderate
Community identity: Aboriginal cultural heritage								
Community identity: First Peoples values, cultural diversity and heritage	Negative: The project's establishment may result in the loss of Aboriginal cultural heritage values.	Very sensitive	Major	Major	The EPRs will involve the development of protocols, recording standards, management of artefacts, procedures and reporting. The CHMP will ensure compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic). There will also be ongoing consultation with First Peoples throughout the life of the project.	EM08, CH02	Minor	Moderate

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
<i>Economy and livelihood: Employment opportunities, skills, development and industry</i>								
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project's construction is expected to support the short-term employment of 50% of the construction workforce within the local and regional study area	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	-	S01, S02, S04, S05	Unchanged	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project's construction is expected to support the short-term employment of approximately 50% of the total construction workforce from the state and national workforce.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	-	-	Unchanged	Low
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project may contribute to a diversity of longer-term and secure employment opportunities and skills training opportunities for residents across various skill levels. There might also be jobs created in related industries who benefit from the economic activity, including retail, administrative services and accommodation and food services.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	-	-	Unchanged	Moderate

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Positive: The project's construction will support local businesses through the purchasing of goods and services to support the project's development	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	The magnitude rating has increased to moderate based on the non-residential and short-term construction workforce seeking accommodation from local and regional accommodation providers, which will create a positive impact on these regional businesses. Also, the project will procure goods and services in accordance with the project's industry participation plan to support local businesses (including compliance by suppliers and contractors).	S01, S05	Moderate	High
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: During the project's construction access to areas within Bass Strait will be restricted, which may impact commercial fishing and shipping operations.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	-	S01, MERU06	Unchanged	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Positive: The project's construction may contribute to the creation of new opportunities for First Peoples businesses to provide services which support activities and workforces on the ground as work progresses.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	Implementation of the industry participation plan will enhance opportunities for First Peoples businesses	S01, S05	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project's construction may contribute to existing and predicted demand for the construction sector, which may require formalised workforce training and development in the local and regional study area.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	-	S01, S02, S04	Unchanged	Moderate

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Potential for tourism accommodation to be constrained due to the construction workforce using short-term accommodation providers. This may result in fewer tourists visiting the region, impacting revenue for regional tourism operators and local businesses such as retail and food services.	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate	-	S01, S02, S04	Unchanged	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Positive: A majority of the project's non-resident workforce will utilise short-term accommodation providers in the regional study area.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	-	S01, S02	Unchanged	High
<i>Economy and livelihoods: Workforce availability</i>								
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Negative: The project's construction may contribute to the demand for construction workers and attract employees away from local businesses. This may reduce the availability of these workers for other industries, and result in increased lead times or workforce shortages for local businesses.	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate	-	S01, S04	Moderate	Moderate

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
<i>Economy and livelihoods: Housing affordability and availability</i>								
Economy and livelihood: Housing affordability and availability	Negative: The project's workforce may contribute to the demand for rental housing in the regional study area and exacerbate existing rental availability and affordability issues, which will disproportionately affect very low- and low-income households.	Very sensitive	Major	Major	A comprehensive workforce and accommodation strategy and plan will be developed to address both the demand from the project construction workforce and the cumulative impact of other large-scale construction and infrastructure projects in the region. This will help mitigate the magnitude of the impact.	S01, S02	Moderate	High
<i>Economy and livelihoods: Agriculture and forestry</i>								
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Disruption to agricultural and forestry activities including restricted access to onsite infrastructure, will reduce productivity	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	Property management plans will be developed for each property and reviewed at least every 6 months. They will cover the practical aspects, potential impacts and rehabilitation phases of the project. They will confirm specific requirements such as easement fencing, access points, the continuation of water supply across the working area, biosecurity requirements, storage of surplus soil and rehabilitation requirements. Through the implementation of the property management plans, the magnitude of this impact has been reduced.	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05	Minor	Moderate
	Negative: Reduced productivity yields of the agricultural and forestry from damage caused by construction activities to natural assets, including soil, water, topography, and vegetation.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High				

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Biosecurity risk to agriculture and forestry activities with the potential introduction of weeds, pests, pathogens, diseases or contaminants that reduces yields, quality and marketability of the farm produce from construction activities created through the movement of people (and their food and water), equipment, machinery and vehicles.	Very sensitive	Major	Major	Informed by engagement with Agriculture Victoria and each land manager, biosecurity protocols will be developed and implemented for each property specific to the agricultural activities undertaken and this will reduce the potential magnitude to negligible. In line with the technical study, the magnitude of this impact has been reduced to negligible through the implementation of the EPRs.	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07	Negligible	Low
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Impacts to the forestry industry with reduced woods flows from permeant clearing of tress or premature harvesting.	Very sensitive	Major	Major	The restrictions on plantation harvesting practices and permeant removal of wood stock will be mitigated through EPRs that lead to route refinement and final design reduce impacts on coupes. As a result, the magnitude has been reduced to minor.	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07	Minor	Moderate
Infrastructure and services: Community health and emergency services								
Infrastructure and services: Health and wellbeing	Negative: The project's construction workforce may increase demand for health and emergency services providers, which may compromise service provision to the existing local and regional community	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate	EPRs to reduce the magnitude of impact to negligible. This is reflective of the fact there will be marginal change; it will impact a small number of individuals and the effect will not be long term. Furthermore, no compromise to service provision to the existing local and regional community is expected due to the project.	S01, S05	Negligible	Low

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
<i>Infrastructure and services: Road access and connectivity</i>								
Infrastructure and services: Connectivity	Negative: The performance of the road network in the project during construction may cause delays for existing road users, reducing the efficiency of the rural road network for rural road users in the local study area.	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate	The local road network will experience a noted uplift in traffic as a result of the construction activities, particularly on local roads used to access laydown areas. EPRs including the transport management plan and consultation will provide local residents and landholders with prewarning that construction activities will be occurring.	T01, S03	Minor	Low
Infrastructure and services" Connectivity	Negative: Disruption of public transport services and infrastructure.	Sensitive	Major	High	The movement of the transformer transporter should occur overnight, avoiding public transport services.	T01, S03	Negligible	Low
Infrastructure and services: Safety and capacity	Negative: The capacity of the road network's road condition, design and operation of the road network to perform safely is reduced through additional traffic use by the project.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	Through the implementation of EPRs, upgrades will be made to roads and intersections to ensure road conditions are adequate. In line with the recommendations of the road safety audit and condition inspections, EPRs require appropriate upgrades of pavement, bridges, intersections and other road infrastructure. Also, clearing of land, vegetation and furniture may be required if larger vehicles are required during construction.	T01, S03	Minor	Moderate
Infrastructure and services: Safety and capacity	Negative: Reduced road safety of vulnerable road users including children and school buses	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	A transport management plan will be developed that prohibits heavy vehicle travel past schools during pick-up/drop-off and prohibits travel through townships during local events. Continuous engagement will ensure any changes to school bus routes is known.	T01, S03	Negligible	Low

Social value	Potential construction impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
People's productive capacities: Health and wellbeing								
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: The project's planning and construction will require an investment of time by landholders and may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	By consulting and communicating directly with impacted landholder, including the development of property management plans and precondition surveys to monitor any changes, the magnitude of this impact has been reduced to a minor.	S03, A01, A02	Minor	Moderate
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: Concern about the project's potential impacts (e.g.; EMF) may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration for surrounding residents and communities	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	By consulting and communicating directly with impacted communities, there is the potential to reduce the magnitude of this impact. This includes providing advanced notification of any potential disruption.	S03	Minor	Moderate
People's productive capacities: Skills development and training								
People's productive capacities: Education, training and skills	Positive: Employment opportunities for First Peoples, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction workforce are made available.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	Through the adoption of the recommended EPRs, there is the opportunity to increase employment opportunities and therefore increase the magnitude of this potential benefit.	EM08, S04 S05	Minor	Moderate

Notes: (-) No justification provided for residual rating when the impact magnitude is unchanged.

Operation

Table 16-13 Residual impact summary for project operation

Social value	Potential operational impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Community identity: Operations								
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Amenity impacts from operation activities, such as noise and vibration impacts	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	With the implementation of an operation noise management plan, the airborne noise generated by operation of the converter station affecting noise sensitive areas will be of a negligible magnitude.	S03, NV04, NV05	Negligible	Moderate
Community identity: Landscape and amenity	Negative: Views of the converter stations from public locations may impact on a community's sense of place	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	Through the implementation of EPRs the impact on communities and residents will be reduced by directly avoiding areas where the primary purpose is stated as residential; maximising setbacks to areas within the Township and Rural Living Zones; minimising distances where the project will run parallel to major roads, highways, and tourist routes; and minimising the amount and type of vegetation required to be removed.	LV01, LV02, LV03	Negligible	Low
Community identity: Ecology	Negative: Ongoing impacts on flora and fauna in line with maintenance activities such as access tracks maintained through vegetation, injury from vehicle movements, weeds and pests, dust emissions, fire ignition risk from vehicles, fragmentation of habitat and disturbance to fauna and flora through lighting.	Very sensitive	Minor	Moderate	Through the implementation of the EPRs, impacts on threatened species can be minimised or avoided. Specific management measures will be determined by the contractors undertaking maintenance works.	EC01, EC02, EC03	Negligible	Low

Social value	Potential operational impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Community identity: Land use and natural resources	Negative: The project's establishment may result in changes to amenity and character that reduce the use of highly valued regional reserves, rail trails, marine areas and beaches that have high community use and are highly valued.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	-	S03	Unchanged	Low
Community identity: Aboriginal cultural heritage								
Community identity: First Peoples values, cultural diversity and heritage	Negative: Project activities in the operational phase that result in vegetation removal and disturbance of ground surfaces and/or subsurface deposits may also create potential impacts on cultural heritage	Very sensitive	Major	Major	The EPRs will involve the development of protocols, recording standards, management of artefacts, procedures and reporting. The CHMP will ensure compliance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic). There will also be ongoing consultation with First Peoples throughout the life of the project.	EM08, CH02	Minor	Moderate
Economy and livelihood: Employment opportunities, skills development and industry								
Economy and livelihood	Positive: The project is expected to result in large taxation receipts (\$762 million in total from 2025 to 2050) from the economic activity generated by the project, which will flow to local, state and the Commonwealth Government.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	-	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07	Unchanged	High
Economy and livelihood: Employment and workforce	Positive: The project's operation is expected to support the employment of three direct employees within the local and regional study area.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	-	S01, S05	Unchanged	Low

Social value	Potential operational impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
Economy and livelihood: Agriculture and forestry								
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Reduced economic and environmental viability of agriculture, forestry and other farming enterprises from damage caused to soil and water quality caused by incursions from project operation and maintenance activities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	Rehabilitation of land following use for construction is critical to manage and prevent impacts on land capability. Management measures will be developed specifically for each property and implemented to reinstate the property to maintain soil stability, fertility, and ground cover species that are optimal for the industry.	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07	Negligible	Low
Economy and livelihood: Industry and business	Negative: Biosecurity risk to agriculture and forestry activities with the potential introduction of weeds, pests, pathogens, diseases or contaminants that reduces yields, quality and marketability of the farm produce from operational and maintenance activities created through the movement of people (and their food and water), equipment, machinery and vehicles.	Very sensitive	Major	Major	Informed by engagement with Agriculture Victoria and each land manager, biosecurity protocols will be developed and implemented for each property specific to the agricultural activities undertaken and this will reduce the potential magnitude to negligible.	A01, A02, A03, A04, A05, A06, A07	Negligible	Low
People's productive capacities: Health and wellbeing								
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Negative: Concern about the project's potential impacts (e.g. EMF) may result in feelings of stress, anxiety and frustration for surrounding residents and communities.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	By consulting and communicating directly with impacted communities, there is the potential to reduce the magnitude of this impact. This includes providing advanced notification of any potential disruption.	S03	Minor	Moderate

Social value	Potential operational impact	Initial impact			Justification for residual rating	Recommended EPRs	Residual impact	
		Sensitivity	Magnitude	Impact rating			Magnitude	Impact rating
People's productive capacities: Physical and mental health	Positive: The project may add to the health and wellbeing of residents in the study area through investments in community infrastructure, the potential downward pressure to be placed on the market regarding energy prices, as well as greater telecommunication security through expansion of the supply-side infrastructure.	Very sensitive	Moderate	High	-	EM08, S04, S05	Unchanged	High
People's productive capacities: Skills development and training								
People's productive capacities: Education, training and skills	Positive: Employment opportunities for First Peoples, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction workforce are made available.	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low	Through the adoption of the recommended EPRs, there is the opportunity to increase employment opportunities and therefore increase the magnitude of this potential benefit.	EM08, S04, S05	Minor	Moderate

Notes: (-) No justification provided for residual rating given magnitude is unchanged.

16.8 Cumulative impacts

Cumulative impacts between Marinus Link and four other projects proposed simultaneously and in the same geographic location are assessed in Table 16-14. Delburn Wind Farm, Star of the South offshore wind farm, Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project and Wooreen Energy Storage System are the four projects.

While two impacts were identified to be moderate (Table 16-14), these include the demand and competition for skilled labour resources that may impact industries requiring similar skill sets and the cumulative impact of the project workforce that will contribute to the demand for health and emergency service providers, which may compromise the service provided to the existing regional population.

There is potential for a cumulative impact (major impact) due to the increased demand for rental housing during construction. The current demand for rental housing is high and the availability is constrained throughout the region. To mitigate the impacts of this project, MLPL will develop a Workforce and Accommodation Strategy to address its potential impact on the rental housing market within the region. However, the cumulative impacts of the other projects will be severe if they are not each mitigated appropriately. It should be noted that even with the mitigations implemented by MLPL, rental availability and affordability is likely to remain an issue for the community.

Table 16-14 Cumulative impacts

Attribute	Impact	Residual impact	Cumulative sensitivity	Cumulative magnitude	Cumulative impact
Housing affordability and availability	The cumulative impact of the project workforce will contribute to the demand for rental housing in the regional study area and exacerbate existing rental availability and affordability issues, affecting very low and low-income households disproportionately.	Moderate (negative)	Very sensitive	Major	Major (negative)
Employment and workforce	The demand and competition for skilled labour resources may impact industries requiring similar skill sets.	Moderate (negative)	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate (negative)
Community infrastructure and services	The cumulative impact of the project workforce will contribute to the demand for health and emergency service providers, which may compromise the service provided to the existing regional population.	Low (negative)	Sensitive	Moderate	Moderate (negative)
Education, training and skills	Employment pathways for First Peoples, females, youth and socially vulnerable groups in the regional construction and operations workforce are available.	Moderate (positive)	Very sensitive	Negligible	Low (positive)

16.9 Conclusion

The assessment of social impacts was undertaken using a social wellbeing framework which categorises impacts across four key social values of community identity, economy and livelihood, infrastructure and services and people's productive capacities (Table 16-3).

The project will benefit local communities through employment and training opportunities, particularly for females, youth, First Peoples, and vulnerable groups. It may generate prosperity, lower energy costs, and support local businesses.

However, during construction, nearby communities may experience property impacts, changes in visual amenity, reduced access to recreational areas, changes to the road network, and general disturbances from noise and dust. Protecting First Peoples cultural heritage and values and threatened species is important, and risks to agriculture and forestry include damage to natural assets and restricted access. Careful management and landholder plans will minimise impacts, and the long-term benefits will outweigh the temporary construction impacts.

There is potential for a cumulative impact on rental housing, particularly regarding availability and affordability for very low and low-income households. Collaborative efforts between government and industry are needed to manage accommodation for the regional workforce and mitigate the cumulative impact on rental housing.

Furthermore, the cumulative impact assessment indicates a sustained high demand for construction workers in the region, necessitating coordinated efforts between government and industry. The demand for health and emergency services also requires a collaborative approach to mitigate the impact on regional healthcare provision.

Following the implementation of proposed EPRs, one negative impact rated as 'high'. This high impact is temporary and limited to the construction phase. As a result, the project is expected to meet the evaluation objective to *'Avoid and, where avoidance is not possible, minimise adverse effects on agriculture, forestry and other land uses, the social fabric of communities, and local infrastructure, businesses and tourism.'*